(b) whether it is also a fact that the Prime Minister has been saying "the days of populism are over"; and

(c) if so, what is the implication of these statements?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) The Prime Minister's remarks reflect the overall approach to the economic management of the country. The trends in the economy are closely monitored and are under constant review and appropiate decisions are taken in the light of emerging trends as and when necessary.

Steps taken by insurance companies to face Competition

2060. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state the steps taken by the State Owned Insurance Companies to face competition after the sector is opened for private enterprises?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): The Life Insurance Corporation of India, General Insurance Corporation of India and the four subsidiary companies have taken adequate measures to face the competition after the sector is opened for private enterprises. The steps already taken/proposed to be taken by LIC includes upgradation to technology including computerisation in all branches, Metro Area Network and Interactive Voice Response System in eight metropolitan centres, delegation of powers for quicker servicing and claims settlement to improve servicing standards to the customer, development of skilled personnel through appropriate training method, introduction of additional products to cater to the different segments of the society, additional channels of distribution and restructuring of the marketing structure greater degree of professionalism in the management of investment, appointment of consultant for suggesting steps to be taken to face competition etc. GIC and the subsidiaries have initiated several steps to improve customer focus and to provide quality of service which inter alia include computerisation of operations, adoption of Citizen's charter evidencing commitment to meeting customer-related requirments, offering wide range of product choices and customized covers, focus

on marketing and distribution network, Human Resource Development with accent on training and skills development, introduction of Managed Health Care Insurance in India and introducing long term savings linked Personal Accident Insurance Products.

Compassionate Appointments in Nationalised Banks

2061. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of rules governing appointments on compassionate grounds in nationalised banks;

(b) whether these rules are strictly followed by the Ludhiana Zonal office of PNB, if so, details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of such applications received during the last three years from different regional offices of that zone, action taken thereon and the reasons for rejections, if any stating rules covering the rejections;

(d) whether some rejected cases from Meerut Regions have been approved by the PNB upon re-considerations; and

(e) if so, the reasons for discriminatory yardsticks in similar cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): Appointments on compassionate grounds in nationalised banks are made by the bank concerned, with the approval of the competent authority, as per the scheme formulated by them for such appointments with the approval of their Boards, keeping in view the guidelines issued by the Government, from time to time.

(b) Punjab National Bank (PNB) have reported that requests for appointment in the bank on compassionate grounds are being considered by the competent authority at their Head Office in terms of the Scheme for Employment on Compassionate Grounds, as approved by the Board of Directors. The Zonal Manager of the respective Zones are required to give their recommendations only.